

Kansas State University CENTER ON AGING

February 2013 Gerontology Update

www.he.k-state.edu/aging



NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's a good time to be a gerontologist. Never before have we had so much need for an understanding of aging populations. You have all heard the numbers and for many of you that is why you are studying gerontology--we've been able to convince you that there is job security in aging. That is not just some line we're trying to sell you. It's true. Two factors have intersected to create a social tsunami: the Baby Boomers and medical technology that has allowed people to extend their life expectancy. Within a relatively short time 1/5 of the American population will be over the age of 65.

However, there is a second reason that studying gerontology is important today. Our society is experiencing what we might gently term "growing pains." We've just narrowly avoided the fiscal cliff, pieces of ObamaCare are being implemented around the country, Republicans and Democrats are arguing about entitlements and how they affect the ability to decrease the national debt, and local and state governments are dropping services and programs for older people because of budget problems. While everyone seems quick to identify problems, not nearly as many seem to have a solution-focus. That's where you come in.

This spring as you learn more about these issues in your gerontology classes focus on how you can become part of the solution. Because aging is a multi-disciplinary issue, we need students from all backgrounds to tackle these problems so invite all your friends to become gerontologists. We've all got a lot to learn this semester. Let's go to it! As always, let us here at the Center on Aging know what we can do to help make your educational experience awesome.

Gayle



Rick, J. Scheidt, Professor in the School of Family Studies and Human Services at Kansas State recently edited the book *Environmental Gerontology: What Now?*

Environmental gerontology – research on aging and the environment – evolved during the late 1960s, when the domain became a relevant topic due to societal concerns with the problems of housing for elderly people. The field proliferated during the 1970s and 1980s, and remains viable and active today on an international scale. However, in recent times, the viability of the field and its future has been brought into question.

In this volume, international experts across diverse areas reflect on the current progress of their respective disciplines, illustrating research-grounded benefits emerging from their work, and suggesting new agenda that can guide progress in the future. The contributors address a wide range of issues, including: evaluation of existing paradigms and new theories that might advance both research and training; issues and applications in methods, measures, and empirically-generated research agenda; innovative approaches to environmental transformations in home, community, and long-term care settings; and understudied populations and issues in environmental gerontology.

NOTE FROM THE STUDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR

Over winter break, I was struck by how quiet it is on campus without students around. However, I was comforted by the assurance that campus would soon fill up with eager students. As I thought about this, I wondered, "How can distance students be an integral part of campus life? How can they feel the Wildcat pride I feel when this campus comes to life each semester?"

While you can't experience it in person, we'd love to invite you to the virtual Open House coming in March. Please look for further details soon. This is an opportunity for you to interact with campus outside your required classes and begin to network with us.

Networking is a critical part of finding career success. It is rare for a person to accomplish their full career or life goals without partners to help along the way. This newsletter is filled with ideas and tips for successful networking and making positive first impressions. These are all valuable skills for marketing yourself and the knowledge you have gained throughout this program.

I look forward to "seeing" you at the virtual Open House and wish you well this semester!

Laci



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WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING???

It is the most powerful way to build professional relationships, actively foster contacts, and disseminate information.

Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Labor indicate that 70% of all jobs are found through networking.

Networking allows you to be in a position to win and be in with the decision makers who are making things happen. You can't take advantage of that unless you position yourself to win by staying in contact with your network.

Special Counsel. (2013). The importance of networking and relationship building. Retrieved from <http://www.specialcounsel.com/legal-jobs/articles/importance-of-networking/>

5 Ways to Make a Memorable First Impression

5. **Be interested and interesting:** If you are truly interested in meeting people and are open to learning about who they are, they will get this in a first impression. When you are meeting people for the first time approach others with a genuine interest in who they are.

4. **Avoid bad days:** People who go to events after having a bad day typically tend to continue to have a bad day. If you're having one of those days (depressed, anxious, etc.), stay home. People will pick this up from your facial expressions, comments, and body language.

3. **Be conscious of your body language:** Body language is a crucial part of first impressions. Your posture, how you carry yourself, and the way you're angling your body are all important. Notice where you point your feet, the position of your shoulders, and the way you shake hands.

2. **Think about your ornaments:** Types of ornamentation are clothes, make-up, jewelry, watches, and shoes. People take each of these into account when making initial judgments. Make sure your ornaments are saying what you want them to say to the people you are meeting for the first time.

1. **Set an intention:** The most important thing to do for giving a good impression is to set your intention. Think about what kind of people you want to meet and what kind of interactions you want to have. This can be a grounding experience and works very well to focus on what kind of energy you want to have for your event.

Forbes. (2013). 5 ways to make a killer first impression. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/yec/2011/11/02/5-ways-to-make-a-killer-first-impression/>

THE Big SCOOP ON Small TALK

Small talk. How can something so "small" be so awkward and scary at times? We all talk. We all have something to say. But when you're meeting new people, your mind may go blank, you may think you have nothing in common with the person next to you, or you may just be plain uncomfortable in this type of social situation. Here are some tips to help ease your mind about small talk while you are networking in and outside of your field.

- ◇ **You Have No Idea Where It Will Go:** Small talk can lead to a host of outcomes, from a merely pleasant exchange to the signing of a multimillion-dollar business deal.
- ◇ **It Makes You Smarter:** A recent study by the researchers at the University of Michigan found that friendly, social interaction can boost our ability to solve problems. For example, some interactions induce people to try to read others' minds and take their perspectives on things.
- ◇ **It Feels Good:** Human beings are social beings. We crave connections. Small talk is one way to achieve this.
- ◇ **It Opens Your Eyes:** Simply put, small talk makes you pay attention.
- ◇ **You'll Be Liked:** People like people who are generous (and confident) enough to engage them. Small talk isn't just about being gregarious or entertaining--it's a gesture of respect.
- ◇ **You Have No Choice:** Getting a job, working with colleagues, winning new clients, entertaining existing ones--all of it requires small talk.

Forbes. (2013). Six reasons small talk is very important---and how to get better at it. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brettnelson/2012/03/30/six-reasons-small-talk-is-very-important-and-how-to-get-better-at-it/>

10 Worst Body Language Mistakes

Avoiding Eye Contact:

When you don't look someone in the eyes, it can signal deception or lack of respect

Slouching:

Bad Posture signals to others that you lack confidence and have poor self-esteem or low energy levels

Weak Handshake:

A handshake that isn't firm will signal a lack of authority. One that is too firm can make you seem overly aggressive

Folding Arms:

This stance creates a sense of being closed off and may signal to others that you are disinterested in them or don't buy into their message

Looking Down:

If giving a presentation, when you look down while making a point, it loses all of its power and can make you look weak. In everyday interactions, it can make you look uncomfortable or self-conscious

Angling Body Away From Others:

Too much physical distance, angling the body away from the person you're speaking with, or not leaning into a conversation may show that you are uncomfortable, distrustful, or disinterested in the subject

Fidgeting and Touching Hair:

Fidgeting and playing with your hair or clothes can reveal an excess of energy, which signals discomfort or anxiety

Invading Others' Space:

When you are closer than 1.5 feet away from a colleague or you treat their possessions and office space as if it were your own, it signals disrespect and that you don't have a clear understanding of personal boundaries

Glancing at the Clock:

Glancing at the clock, at your watch, or even looking past the person you're speaking with will communicate disinterest or arrogance

Frowning or Scowling:

Scowls and frowns, often unintentional and unconscious, communicate unhappiness and disagreement

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